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GILDING.

SOME knowledge of the nature of this ornamental work is necessary with a view to preserve it in a proper manner and to prevent its being damaged by wrong treatment. Gilding necessarily varies in character according to the material to which it is applied and the object in view.

Wood, leather, paper, and various substances are gilt by fastening on leaves of gold by means of some cement, but metals are gilt chiefly by the amalgamation effected by galvanism.

Gilding on wood is the most general used for various moldings and ornaments in apartments and on articles of furniture, as chairs, settees, picture frames, etc. To the rich color and splendid lustre of gold is added the quality of its unalterability in the air, not rusting or oxidating by ordinary causes. Its great value necessitates its extension by virtue of its ductility into extraordinarily thin leaves, reaching the quarter millionth part of an inch.

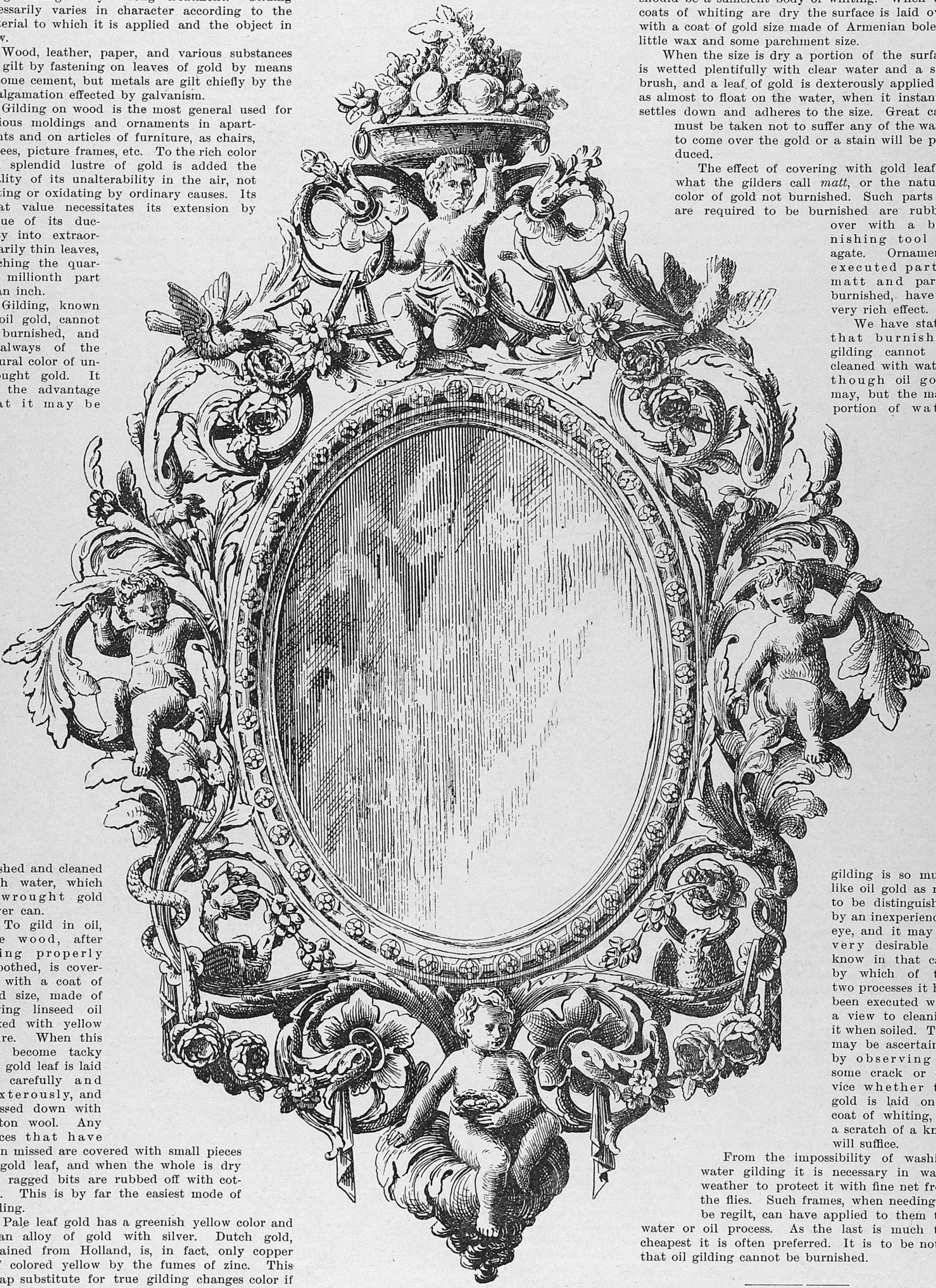
Gilding, known as oil gold, cannot be burnished, and is always of the natural color of unwrought gold. It has the advantage that it may be washed and cleaned with water, which unwrought gold never can.

To gild in oil, the wood, after being properly smoothed, is covered with a coat of gold size, made of drying linseed oil mixed with yellow ochre. When this has become tacky the gold leaf is laid on carefully and dexterously, and pressed down with cotton wool. Any places that have been missed are covered with small pieces of gold leaf, and when the whole is dry the ragged bits are rubbed off with cotton. This is by far the easiest mode of gilding.

Pale leaf gold has a greenish yellow color and is an alloy of gold with silver. Dutch gold, obtained from Holland, is, in fact, only copper leaf colored yellow by the fumes of zinc. This cheap substitute for true gilding changes color if exposed to moisture. Silver leaf, which is prepared in the same manner as that of gold, is liable to tarnish unless well secured by varnish. If covered with a transparent yellow varnish it has much the appearance of gold.

Japanner's gilding, so suitable for folding screens and cabinets, is applicable to ornaments for folding screens, cabinet panels, etc., drawn on lacquer with camel's hair pencil in japanner's gold size, made by boiling linseed oil with gum animi and a little vermilion. When the size is nearly dry gold powder or gold leaf is applied to the design thus traced.

Where gold has been fixed by means of linseed oil it will bear being washed without coming off.



CARVED FRAME, BY A. G. WEISZ.

Burnished or water gilding is much more difficult, and as it will not admit of being wetted, it is only fit for work always to be kept within doors.

For this method of gilding the wood is first covered with four coats of whiting and size, for the gilding to be perfect it is necessary that there should be a sufficient body of whiting. When the coats of whiting are dry the surface is laid over with a coat of gold size made of Armenian bole, a little wax and some parchment size.

When the size is dry a portion of the surface is wetted plentifully with clear water and a soft brush, and a leaf of gold is dexterously applied so as almost to float on the water, when it instantly settles down and adheres to the size. Great care must be taken not to suffer any of the water to come over the gold or a stain will be produced.

The effect of covering with gold leaf is what the gilders call *matt*, or the natural color of gold not burnished. Such parts as are required to be burnished are rubbed over with a burnishing tool of agate. Ornaments executed partly matt and partly burnished, have a very rich effect.

We have stated that burnished gilding cannot be cleaned with water, though oil gold may, but the matt portion of water gilding is so much like oil gold as not to be distinguished by an inexperienced eye, and it may be very desirable to know in that case by which of the two processes it has been executed with a view to cleaning it when soiled. This may be ascertained by observing in some crack or device whether the gold is laid on a coat of whiting, or a scratch of a knife will suffice.

From the impossibility of washing water gilding it is necessary in warm weather to protect it with fine net from the flies. Such frames, when needing to be regilt, can have applied to them the water or oil process. As the last is much the cheapest it is often preferred. It is to be noted that oil gilding cannot be burnished.

IF you want an ornament to improve a vacant wall space, combine, points inward, a few Japanese fans, with rounded periphery, and from the circumference let lines of black sticks radiate. The whole has a shield-like appearance.